

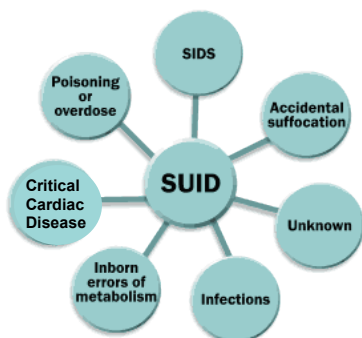


MCH Data Brief

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Kentucky Department for Public Health, Division of Maternal & Child Health

Sudden Unexpected Infant Deaths (SUID) - SIDS and more



Historically, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) had been the third leading cause of infant mortality both Nationally and in Kentucky. Even after a thorough investigation, it may be difficult to separate SIDS from other similar causes of death. Thus the CDC is now recommending a new broader category of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), which is helpful in determining potential prevention efforts. SUID is defined as deaths that occur suddenly and unexpectedly, during the first year of life in which the cause of death is not immediately obvious prior to investigation.¹ After investigations, some of the causes of SUID turn out to be suffocation, homicide, neglect, poisoning, and metabolic disorders. About half of the infant deaths in the SUID category are attributed to classic SIDS, where the sudden death of an infant cannot be explained after a thorough investigation (including a complete autopsy, death scene investigation, and review of the clinical history).¹ However, many of these infants deaths, including SIDS, have common opportunities for prevention, so studying this broader group helps us improve prevention efforts.

Sleep-Related Infant Deaths

The most common risk factor for Sudden Unexpected Infant Deaths is an infant sleeping in an unsafe environment. This risk factor is seen in accidental suffocations, many deaths of unknown causes, and is the predominate risk factor in classic SIDS. From a prevention standpoint, it is very critical that risk factors associated with sleep-related death be well understood.

An unsafe sleep environment includes any of the following risk factors: bed-sharing, use of sofa/couch, soft bedding or presence of stuffed animals in sleep environment, use of an adult bed, and placed prone (on stomach) or side position. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has new recommendations for prevention that broaden the messages of “Back to Sleep” to “Safe to Sleep” to reduce the risks of all sleep-related infant deaths, including SIDS (see reverse side for AAP recommendations).²

Sleep-Related Risk Factors:

Bed sharing or co-sleeping

Sofa/couch sleeping

Soft/loose bedding

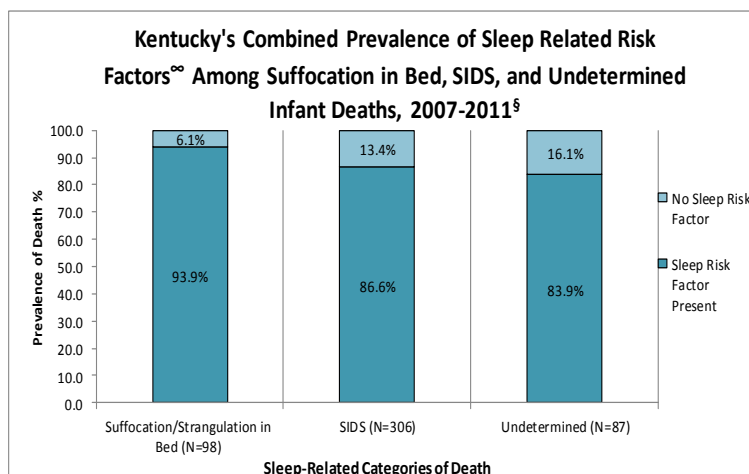
Soft Objects

Use of an adult bed

Placed prone or side position

Kentucky's Infant Deaths with Sleep-Related Risk Factors

In a recent study, the Kentucky Maternal and Child Health team collected data on Kentucky infant deaths occurring from 2007 through 2011 specifically for identification of risk factors related to the sleep environment. Rather than just looking at SIDS deaths, the team took the broader view and looked at deaths that were due to SIDS, accidental suffocations, or infant deaths where the cause could not be determined.



[∞]Sleep-related risk factor includes: Bed sharing or co-sleeping, sofa/couch sleeping, soft bedding, use of an adult bed, and placed prone or side position.

[§]Preliminary data: 2009-2011.

Data Source: Kentucky Vital Statistics, Death Certificate File 2007-2011; Kentucky Medical Examiner Reports, 2007-2011; Coroner's Reports; and Child Fatality Review Team Reports.

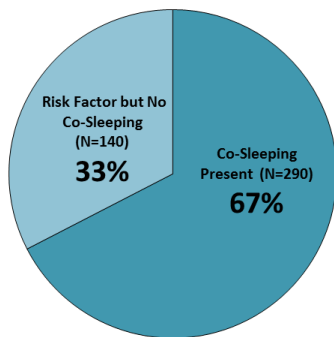
Data Compiled and Analyzed by Manza Agovi, MPH, PhD©

- ◆ In all three of these categories of infant deaths, from 2007-2011, nearly **88%** of the infant deaths had documentation of a sleep-related risk factor.
- ◆ This means that in Kentucky, at least 8 out of 10 of these infant deaths might have been prevented if the infant was in a safe sleep environment—sleeping alone, on their back, in a crib, without soft pillows, blankets, or toys, and on a firm mattress.

Prevention Efforts

Multiple sleep-related risk factors can be present simultaneously, so the prevention approach is to teach families to always place an infant in a safe sleep environment. However, in Kentucky's data, one particular sleep-related risk factor is prominent—co-sleeping. Of Kentucky's infant deaths with a sleep-related risk factor, two thirds of those deaths had co-sleeping noted. This gives Kentucky a very specific target for prevention and education.

Prevalence of Co-Sleeping Among Kentucky Infant Deaths with a Documented Sleep Related Risk Factor, 2007-2011[§]



[§]Preliminary data: 2009-2011.

Data Source: Kentucky Vital Statistics, Death Certificate File 2007-2011; Kentucky Medical Examiner Reports, 2007-2011; Coroner's Reports; and Child Fatality Review Team Reports.

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- ◆ Of all the different sleep-related risk factors, co-sleeping occurs most often. Co-sleeping or bed sharing refers to an infant sleeping in close proximity to another individual on a sleeping surface. Co-sleeping can occur with parents, caregivers, multiple people including adults and children, or siblings/other children.
- ◆ AAP recommends infant s sleep in a crib alone and on their backs, but may be in the same room as the adults.

The National Institute of Child Health and Development has new materials, based on the AAP recommendations , which are recommended for use nation-wide.



<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/sids/Pages/sids.aspx>

Collaborative Improvement & Innovation Network (ColIN): Safe Sleep Strategies:³

- ◆ Improve Infant care-giver knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practices
- ◆ Standardize training within provider systems
- ◆ Develop strategic alliances and consistent messaging between public health, clinical providers, and community partners

AAP Safe-Sleep Recommendations:²

- ◆ Place baby on their back for every sleep
- ◆ Place baby on firm sleep surface
- ◆ Keep soft objects, loose bedding, or any objects that could increase the risk of entrapment, suffocation, or strangulation out of the crib
- ◆ Place baby in the same room where you sleep but not the same bed
- ◆ Breastfeed as much and for as long as you can
- ◆ Schedule and go to all well-child visits
- ◆ Keep baby away from smokers and places where people smoke
- ◆ Do not let your baby get too hot
- ◆ Offer a pacifier at nap time and bedtime
- ◆ Do not use home cardiorespiratory monitors to help reduce the risk of SIDS
- ◆ Do not use products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS

The sleep environment is a modifiable risk factor and one that can be the target for prevention and health promotion activities in Kentucky in order to reduce infant deaths.

References:

¹ Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Sudden Unexpected Infant Death and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome*. Retrieved February 6, 2013 from <http://www.cdc.gov/SIDS/index.htm>

² American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). *News: AAP Expands Guidelines for Infant Sleep Safety and SIDS Risk Reduction*. Retrieved January 30, 2013 from <http://www.healthychildren.org/english/news/pages/aap-expands-guidelines-for-infant-sleep-safety-and-sids-risk-reduction.aspx>

³Ghandour R., Presentation: *Collaborative Improvement & Innovation Network (ColIN) 101*. Presented February 10, 2013.